

# Town of Bluffton 2010 Annual Report



## Lisa B. Sulka, Mayor

Fred Hamilton, Mayor Pro Tempore

Oliver Brown, Councilman

Allyne Mitchell, Councilwoman

Mike Raymond, Councilman

## A Message From Mayor Sulka

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or online at

[www.townofbluffton.sc.gov](http://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov)

Greetings from the Town of Bluffton!

On behalf of the town, I bring you well wishes from myself, Council and our staff.

This has been a busy year in our town, beginning with our first strategic planning session, followed by a very stringent budget process. As elected officials and residents of Beaufort County, we can all learn from each other, and need to work with each other to accomplish the many goals all of us have this year.

**"We have strived to be transparent in every aspect of town government."**

We hope that you will find this town update both informative and useful. I would call this information a "package of successes", and you will see that even in tough economic times, we can be inventive in finding ways to 'get things done'. This council has a major focus on completing tasks and accomplishing our goals. You will see this demonstrated in our strategic plan and the set of goals we have for ourselves. All of this can be seen on our web page at [www.townofbluffton.sc.gov](http://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov). We

have strived to be transparent in every aspect of town government. You can see all of our agendas, financial reports, staff reports, minutes, budget, project cost and progress, bid information, and a calendar of events on this site. Take time to visit this site often.

Our town is unique in that we started as small river-front town of only one square mile and in a short period of time grew to over 54 square miles. We will continue to look forward while maintaining the legacy of the past, and have a passion to help our region move toward a more positive and prosperous future.

We are here to serve, so if we can ever be of assistance, please feel free to give us a call.

*Lisa B. Sulka*



### Facts About Bluffton

- The Town of Bluffton was incorporated in 1852.
- Today's Town Boundary encompasses 54 square miles.
- 1990 Census Population was 738.
- 2000 Census Population was 1275.
- 2005 Special Census Population was 4885.
- Estimated Population in June 2009 was 14,358.
- The May River is 15 miles in length.
- The May River watershed encompasses 40 square miles.

## Bluffton Town Council



Councilman  
Oliver Brown



Mayor Pro Tempore,  
Fred Hamilton



Mayor  
Lisa Sulka



Councilwoman  
Allyne Mitchell



Councilman  
Mike Raymond



## "A Year of Progress"

### *A Message From Town Manager, Anthony W. Barrett*

This has been a year of progress, activity and initiatives - all driven by a governing body whose sole mission is protecting and enhancing the quality of life of Bluffton. Of course, all of the successes listed above could not have happened without the dedicated efforts of our elected officials, caring volunteers and a highly talented group of employees who recognize that we are a part of something larger than ourselves and that we cannot succeed if our common endeavor does poorly - and that we all recognize there is no "they" or "them", only an "us". Needless to say, I am very proud of what The Town of Bluffton has and is on the verge of accomplishing working with, and sustaining the Bluffton quality of life within the "Bluffton State of Mind". The initiatives for FY 2010 included, but were not limited to the following:

- Creation and funding of the May River Implementation Plan and identifying a project which will protect 20% of the watershed
- Creating the first Strategic Plan;
- Obtaining the first Bond Rating for the Community;
- Issuing bonds to build Public Safety Building;
- Constructing a new Public Works building;
- Completing the first phase of the Streetscape;
- Undertaking the first Affordable Housing Program;
- Beginning of the Buck Island/ Simmonsville water and sewer project;
- Improving Oyster Factory Park; and
- Major drainage improvements throughout the Town

While most of the activities above can be readily seen and easily identified, there are other achievements which are not so obvious, yet are just as important to maintaining quality of life. Among those are:

- No tax increase for this budget year by doing more with less
- Improvements to the Town Web site where projects can be tracked and where citizens can view Council meeting materials prior to meetings
- Emergency operations improvements

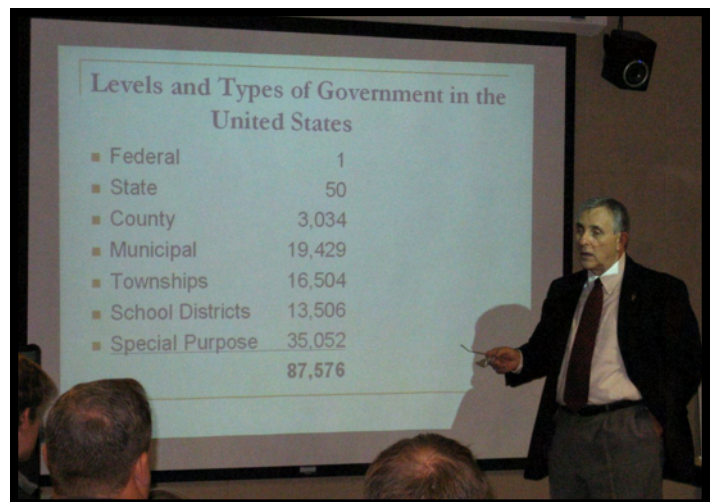
- Reaching out to Beaufort County and working together on water quality and storm water
- Amendments to our Business License Program to assist us in attracting more knowledge based companies
- Ongoing land use and code revisions as a prelude to implementing a **form based code**
- Established a Police Neighborhood services unit and instituted the principles of Community Policing throughout the town.
- Awarded the CAFAR for the second year in a row, the highest financial recognition for Municipal Government
- Reorganization of Town operations
- Renegotiation of a major Trash contract with multiyear savings
- Refinancing of some of Town Debt with savings throughout the life of the bonds

While we have much more to accomplish, I am confident with the guidance of the elected officials, the support of citizens, and the work of a very competent staff, that we will achieve much more in the coming years. I hope after reading this information, you will be inspired to join us on making Bluffton the community we all want it to be.

Town Manager,  
Anthony W. Barrett



(below) Town Manager,  
Anthony Barrett delivers  
a presentation to the  
2010 Leadership Class.







## Town of Bluffton Finance Department

The Town of Bluffton's Finance Department had many accomplishments in 2010.

- Town's Fiscal Year 2009 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) was awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the second consecutive year the Town has received this award.
- Prepared a five-year financial projection for strategic planning and capital improvements.
- Prepared an austere consolidated municipal budget for Fiscal Year 2011 in response to the challenging economic conditions. The total consolidated budget for Fiscal Year 2011 is \$3.8 million less than Fiscal Year 2010.
- The Town issued a \$6.5 million General Obligation Bond for the new Law Enforcement Center. The bonds were structured as 25-year debt issued as taxable Build America Bonds at a net interest rate of 3.57%, which saved the Town over \$534,000 compared to the lowest tax-exempt bid.
- The Town's first bond rating was Aa2 from Moody's and AA- from Standard and Poor's.
- Both agencies stated the high rating reflects the growth in the tax base, healthy financial position supported by fiscal policies professional management, and modest debt.
- Rolled back General Fund millage 2.3 mills to support debt service for the Law Enforcement Center bond issue.
- Reimbursable grant expenditures totaled \$436,502 in Fiscal Year 2010.
- Formal Financial Policies were written and adopted incorporating the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Best Practices.
- Trisha Greathouse, Finance Manager, graduated from the 2010 Leadership Hilton Head-Bluffton. Dawn Goodwin, Business License Coordinator, attained ABL (Accreditation in Business Licensing) certification.
- Issued 2,280 business licenses.
- Incorporated and adopted a new Business License Incentive Program to provide incentive to qualified new businesses whereby new jobs are created.
- Implemented "Grants In Action" section on the Town's website with focus on providing financial transparency to our citizens.



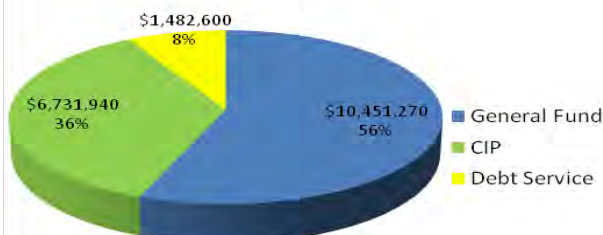
**2010 CAFR Award** (L to R) Councilman Oliver Brown, Councilwoman Allyne Mitchell, Mayor Lisa Sulka, Assistant Town Manager Shirley Freeman, Mayor Pro Tem Fred Hamilton, Councilman Michael Raymond, and Trisha



- Secured the Town's place on the World Wide Web officially as a government entity with the placement extension of [www.townofbluffton.sc.gov](http://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov)
- Created and made available to our citizens the **Town of Bluffton Address Locating System** on our web site.
- Created and made available in hard copy form the **Town of Bluffton Street and Address Atlas** which lists all parcels in Bluffton, complete with index, full legend, and map grid.

## CONSOLIDATED MUNICIPAL BUDGET – MAJOR FUNDS

**FY 2011 Proposed Budget - \$18,665,810**



**FY 2010 Revised Budget - \$22,486,705**





# Town of Bluffton

## Growth Management Department

### 2010 Growth Management Accomplishments:

- Reestablished Town Council's Affordable Housing Subcommittee.
- Established the Neighborhood Assistance Program to provide free property improvement initiatives for Bluffton homeowners. It is the Town's intent to use this program to help create a safer, more vibrant community that will retain its character, while increasing the quality of life for all residents and preserving the May River. Accomplishments in the program's first year include:
  - Participated in the inaugural *A Brush with Kindness* Program with Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity. In FY2010, 24 homes were repaired for families making less than 80% of the area median income.
  - Demolished unsafe, dilapidated structures and removed debris from 16 sites in the Buck Island, Simmonsville, Goethe and Old Town neighborhoods.
  - Performed septic maintenance and repairs for 27 residents in the Buck Island, Simmonsville, Goethe and Old Town neighborhoods.
- Established 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *A Brush with Kindness* Program with Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity.
- Implemented the South Carolina Forestry Commission's Urban and Community Forestry Grant. The Town drafted an updated comprehensive town-wide tree ordinance, as well as provided training and continuing education for town staff.
- Partnered with Beaufort County on the implementation of an Intergovernmental Agreement for Watershed Planning in Beaufort County starting with the May River Watershed.
- Established the May River Action Plan as a means for long-term protection and preservation of water quality in the May River.
- Received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding administered by the SC Forestry Commission. Grant will fund Town Hazard Tree Removal and Mitigation Program that will enrich the health of the Town's trees on public property.
- Received a Capacity Building Grant from SCDHEC-OCRM for implementation of sustainability elements as part of the town-wide overhaul of the Unified Ordinance.
- Formalized an Intergovernmental Agreement with Beaufort County to address watershed planning initiatives in Southern Beaufort County.
- Removed more than 2 tons of trash during the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual May River Clean Up.
- Partnered and secured funding in collaboration with the Lowcountry Council of Governments and other regional jurisdictions in the Okatie River SC DHEC Section 319 Grant.
- Amended the Unified Ordinance to include requirements for gated communities to install electronic gate access systems allowing emergency vehicles immediate entry thereby reducing emergency response times.
- Amended the Municipal Code to include regulations to provide for improvements to unsafe uninhabited buildings. The ordinance amendments address neighborhood character and reduced the compliance timeframe from 60 days to 30 days.
- Amended the Unified Ordinance Stormwater Management section to provide provisions for volume control of stormwater runoff.
- Amended the Stormwater Design Manual to include provisions for volume control oriented best management practices.
- Implemented Land Management Software Program, EnerGov, which allows for electronic processing and tracking of applications submitted to the Growth Management Department and the Finance Department. The program also provides for mobile field inspections and interactive voice response for inspection requests thus, improving customer service, response time, and staff efficiency.
- Approved 199 New, single-family building permits; 60,391 square feet.
- Developed Design Concepts for Comprehensive Wayfinding Signage Program in association with the Preserve America Old Town Historic Signage Grant.





Wharf Street Redevelopment Project funded through SC State Housing Finance Development Authority Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant.



Neighborhood Stabilization efforts include demolition of unsafe structures through the SC State Housing Finance Development Authority Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant.

Town initiates overhaul of Unified Development Ordinance to promote Economic Development Initiatives and watershed based growth management.



(above) The Rain Barrel/Rain Garden program was initiated as part of the SC DHEC Section 319 Grant to improve water quality conditions on the May River. To date 135 of 145 rain barrels and 1 rain garden have been installed.





## Town of Bluffton Police Department



- The Department continues to be busy responding to over 21,000 calls for service throughout the Town of Bluffton.
- The Department established a Bicycle Registration Program to recover stolen bicycles. There were nearly 200 bicycles reported stolen from 2007 – 2009 with only 9% of the bicycles returned to the owner. This program will allow law enforcement to have a serial number for their bicycle on file with the citizen's address and phone number. The citizen will receive a bicycle registration sticker with a tracking number that will be applied to their bicycle.
- The Department created a Burglary Prevention Brochure for residents in the Town of Bluffton. This brochure provides information about residential burglary prevention and ways to prevent it happening to the citizens.
- The Department partnered with Waste Management for the Waste Watch Program. Waste Management drivers will report any suspicious activity to the Bluffton Police Department that may take place during their routes.
- The Department created a Vehicle Break In Prevention Brochure. This brochure provides information about vehicle break in and vehicle theft and ways to prevent it happening to the citizens.
- The Department established an Anti-Graffiti Voucher Program. The Department, in conjunction with area paint stores, have agreed to work together to eradicate graffiti by selling the products at a reduced rate to victims of graffiti, keeping the impact to victims to a minimum and helping the Town of Bluffton stay clean and beautiful.
- The Department added Nixle to the Department's website. This program allows citizens to sign up on the website to receive up to date information on traffic congestion, missing persons, community events and so much more on their cell phone and/or email account..

The Department began construction of a new 20,000 square foot facility. This new building will serve as the departments headquarter and contain state-of-the-art areas for housing and processing prisoners, processing evidence and conducting interviews.





## Town of Bluffton Engineering and Facilities Departments

### Engineering Update:

- Updated Purchasing Ordinance to include local vendor preference and assistance for women and minority business enterprises; and
- Relocated offices to 1261 May River Road; and
- Collaborated with Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority on several sewer projects including Buck Island/Simmons ville and Old Town; and
- Completed May River/Bruin Road Streetscape, Phase 1.

### Facilities/Asset Management Update:

- Completed construction and relocated to new Building & Grounds Facility; and
- Self performing grounds and landscape maintenance on Tech Park, Streetscape and other Town assets; and
- Special Event team (Police, Fire, EMS, and Staff) processed a 52% increase in event applications in 2010; and
- Established cooperative community committees for trees and community center renovations; and
- Completed maintenance on over 5.4 miles of drainage ditch; and
- Continued consolidating services and maintenance contracts to achieve economy of scale and reduce expenses.



**May River/Bruin Road Streetscape—Phase One**

**Date of Completion April 2010**



**Building & Ground Groundbreaking**

**May 19, 2010**

**Building & Grounds Facility**

**Date of Completion September 2010**



**This project was completed under budget and on time.**





Law Enforcement Center Groundbreaking– June 24, 2010



Targeted for completion in April 2011, the new Law Enforcement Center building is approximately 19,618 square feet with a main structure, a sally port for secure transport of prisoners and evidence, and an evidence & lab area. Also, the site plan provides for roads and utilities for two future building sites on adjacent Town-owned property plus access for land owned by Beaufort County and others.



Rendering of Law Enforcement Center being built in the Tech Park at Buckwalter Place

*"Even in tough economic times, we can be inventive in finding ways to 'get things done'."*

—Mayor Lisa Sulka



BIS Sewer, Phase 1 Groundbreaking  
July 7, 2010

Engineering Department

Restructured 2009

Building & Grounds Facilities	Construction	Sep. – 10
Oyster Factory Park, Phase 1	Construction	Oct. – 10
New River Trail Head	Construction	Oct. – 10
Old Town Sewer	Construction	Oct. – 10
BIS Sewer, Phase 1	Construction	Dec. - 10
Verdier Cove Drainage Basin	Construction	Dec. - 10
Law Enforcement Complex	Construction	Apr. - 11
Stormwater – Small Projects	Construction	On – Going
Buckwalter Place Drainage	Design	Jan. – 11
Streetscape, Phase II	Design	Mar. – 11
Buckwalter Place Trail	Design	Mar. – 11
BIS Sewer, Phase II	Design	Apr. – 11
Wayfinding Signage	Design	Apr. – 11
"319" Grant Pilot Project	Design	May – 11
NSP Affordable Housing	Design	May – 11
Parks & Recreation Improvements	Design	On – Going
DuBois Park	Concept	Mar. – 11
BIS Pathways, Next Phase	Concept	Jun. – 11





## Office of the Town Clerk

- Town Council Meeting agenda packet items are now available on the Town's website for public review/printing. The Town is "going green"!
- Town Council members are now using laptops during Town Council meetings instead of relying on paper.
- Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk are continuing their education to better serve Council, Staff and the residents of the Town of Bluffton with the Municipal Association of South Carolina.
- Town documents can now be researched on the Town website ([www.townofbluffton.sc.gov](http://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov)).



## Town of Bluffton Human Resources

### FY 2010 Accomplishments

- Town of Bluffton Employee Appreciation Day was held on Thursday, March 4, 2010. The Mayor and Council members prepared breakfast for the employees and several prizes were given away.
- A personnel policy manual was created for staff.
- 69% of the Town's employees became CPR and AED certified through the American Heart Association in July.
- Employees were provided training in customer service, empathy and communication in May.



### Core Beliefs

We, The Town of Bluffton—  
Mayor and Council, Managers,  
Employees take:

We are	<b>P</b> roductive.
We take	<b>R</b> esponsibility.
We act with	<b>I</b> ntegrity.
We have	<b>D</b> edication to Bluffton.
We are	<b>E</b> nthusiastic.

in serving you!





# BLUFFTON REGIONAL MAP

## Legend

### JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County
- Bluffton Town Limit
- County Boundary Line

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Bluffton Parcel Lines
- Jasper County Parcel Lines
- Bluffton Parcel Lines
- Existing Fire Station
- Proposed Fire Station
- Existing Fire Station
- Proposed Fire Station
- Existing School
- Proposed/Future School
- Existing Police Station
- Proposed Police Station
- Existing Police Station
- Proposed Police Station
- Existing Park/Recreation
- Proposed Park/Recreation
- Future Park/Recreation
- Government
- Public Boat Landing

### TRANSPORTATION

- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Paved Driveway
- Unpaved Driveway
- Future Road
- New River Trail
- Interstate
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

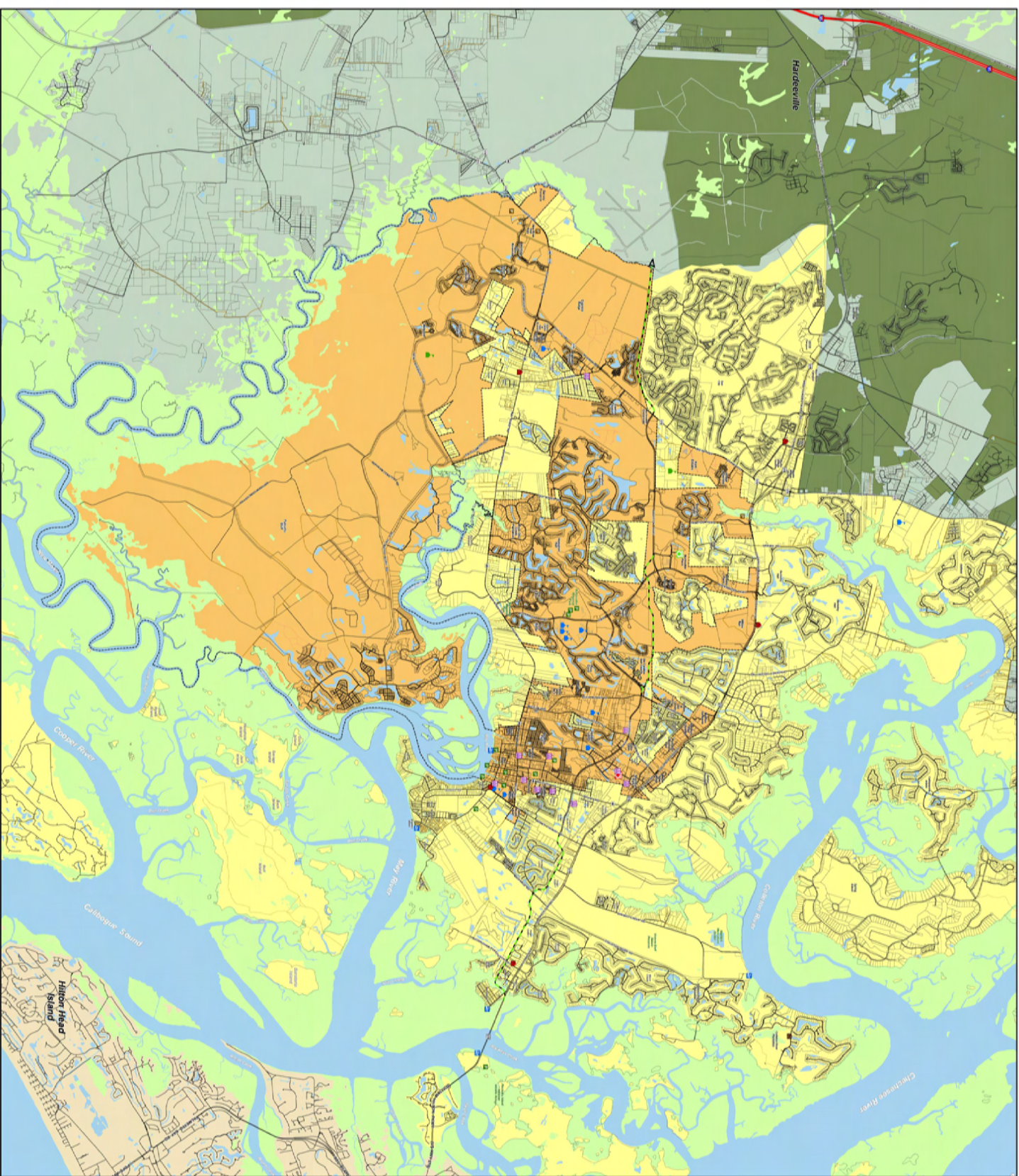
### HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Updated: July 28, 2010

GIS Office

Scale in Miles





# Town of Bluffton

## Goals 2015

Celebrate the May River

Livable, Sustainable Bluffton Community

Town Government: Excellent Services,  
Financially Responsible

Local Economic Expansion and Diversification

Upgraded Town Infrastructure and Facilities



"Bluffton—A State of Mind."

## **Town of Bluffton Staff**

### **Anthony W. Barrett**

Town Manager  
843.706.4500  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

### **Marc Orlando**

Deputy Town Manager  
Director of Growth Management  
843.706.4510  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

### **Shirley Freeman**

Director of Finance and Administration  
843.706.4500  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

### **Bob Fletcher**

Director of Engineering and Facilities  
843.706.4599  
39 Persimmon Street, Suite 604  
Bluffton, SC 29910

### **Chief David McAllister**

Chief of Police  
843.706.4550 (non-emergencies)  
39 Persimmon Street, Suite 601  
Bluffton, SC 29910

## **Office Phone Numbers**

Construction and Compliance Office  
843.706.4522  
181 Bluffton Rd. Bldg. A  
Bluffton, SC 29910

Planning and Environmental Sustainability Office  
843.706.4510  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

Facilities and Asset Management Office  
843.706.4580  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

Business License Office  
843.706.4501  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

Community Development Office  
843.706.4579  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

Municipal Court Office  
843.706.4530  
20 Bridge Street  
Bluffton, SC 29910

Business License Office  
843.706.4501  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910

Human Resource Office  
843.706.4500  
20 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 386, Bluffton, SC 29910